



To:

Mrs. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor, GBM, GBS, Chief Executive of the HKSAR,

Mr. Michael Wong Wai Lun, JP, Secretary for Development,

Mr. Wong Kam Sing, GBS, JP, Secretary for the Environment,

Mr. Frank Chan Fan, JP, Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr. Robin LEE Kui Biu, JP, Head of the Sustainable Lantau Office,

Implement Conservation for the South Lantau Policy

In the 'Sustainable Lantau Blueprint' launched last year, the government proposed 'Development in the North, Conservation for the South'. Therefore, South Lantau is clearly planned for 'conservation with sustainable leisure and recreational use'. According to investigations by local communities and green groups, the beautiful rural environment of Lantau is now unfortunately suffering from varying degrees of damage. After a long period of compliance and reporting, government departments' have still failed to prevent and stop this damage. This failure leads indirectly to encouragement of further destruction of Lantau. It is suspected that the government is only focusing on 'Development in the North' and is disregarding 'Conservation for the South'.

Pui O and Shui Hau are ecologically important sites located in South Lantau. Both are facing environmental vandalism because of development pressure, even though they are both zoned 'Costal Protection Areas' (CPA) under 'South Lantau Coast Outline Zoning Plan' (South Lantau Coast OZP). Pui O has unique wetland ecology, which is an important habitat for buffalo. Shui Hau contains a rich ecosystem, including rivers, mangroves and wetlands. Furthermore, the mudflat is a habitat for an endangered species – the Horseshoe Crab. With reference to an 'Ecological Surveyor Training Program in Shui Hau Wan' in 2014, students from Environmental Life Science Society, SS and HKUSU recorded over 180 species at Shui Hau. After the establishment of the Lantau Development Advisory Committee in 2014, various environmental vandalism continued to happen in Pui O, Shui Hau and other South Lantau areas. Earlier this year, two wetlands were dug up and dumped on with landfilling material. The groups' concern is that Lantau's rural environment and its ecology will be lost if this situation continues. Conservation with sustainable leisure and recreational uses will become a hollow promise.

The groups' found out that the laws and regulations which control waste disposal and land use are not sufficient for Governmental departments to prevent, stop or prosecute the perpetrators of environmental vandalism. For example, the Planning Department has no enforcement power in South Lantau as it is not covered by Development Permission Area Plan under the Town Planning Board Ordinance. The Lands Department cannot become involved if the case is located on private land because of the limitation of lease enforcement. Even worse, the Environmental Protection Department acquiesces, and even legalises environmental vandalism through an acknowledgment letter in advance under the Waste Disposal Ordinance. As a result, the CPA under South Lantau Coast OZP is merely a beautiful name. The groups' can only urge the government to amend the above ordinance and plug the loopholes in order to protect Lantau.

The government should be aware of the above issues on Lantau Island. The balancing of development and conservation on Lantau and the enhancement of the protection of Lantau's ecological environment are missions under the 'Sustainable Lantau blueprint' published in June 2017. The Pui O dumping issue is even listed in the chapter of 'Nature and Cultural Conservation Initiatives' in the blueprint. Carrie Lam has suggested 'to take forward various appropriate countryside conservation initiatives in selected pilot areas on Lantau, such as Tai O, Shui Hau and Pui O, to support the efforts in developing and conserving Lantau, in her 2017 policy agenda. In the same year, Legco has approved funding to set up the Sustainable Lantau Office with the same mission as the blueprint. However, the meeting held in January was only at a cross departmental level. Without implementing a higher-level administrative team, there was no authority to step out from the existing framework and set up a more effective policy. The policy and concrete measure to protect South Lantau has no end in sight.

Save Lantau Alliance, Land Justice, WWF-Hong Kong, Conservation Association, Green Power, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and fellow groups have set up a Lantau Conversation Monitoring Group, as a community monitoring group to protect South Lantau. The public may not be aware of the importance of ecological sites threatened by dumping and other destruction at locations such as Shui Hao and Pui O. The group will regularly inspect different important sites in Lantau, to provide follow ups on the environmental vandalism situation and to prevent the government and developers from developing the site through 'Destroy first, develop later' practice.

Herewith, we urge the Chief executive and the government.

1. To establish an inter-bureau group, including Development Bureau, Environmental Bureau, Transport and Housing Bureau and other related Bureau's, lead by the Chief Secretary, to initiate appropriate measures to stop dumping and other environmental vandalism immediately. The group should report to Legco and the public regularly.

2. To honour the promise of protecting South Lantau, including but not limited to the policy suggested by green groups on 16 June 2017 (details please follow: <https://goo.gl/y4YMSy>)

- To amend loopholes in the law: All Outline Zoning Plan's should be covered by a Development Permission Area Plan; to amend the Waste Disposal Ordinance - the person in charge needs Legal permission before any waste disposal on private or government land
- To design a green transport strategy: The Lantau Closed Road (including South Lantau) should maintain the current traffic restriction; To implement special traffic restrictions on construction vehicles and machinery if they enter South Lantau, Tung Chung Valley and Tung Chung Bay, to prevent large scale dumping
- To resume private land for conservation: To rezone Pui O into a 'Nature Park'
- To protect mudflats at Shui Hao: To rezone Shui Hao Bay and mainstream into Marine Park or SSSI For a short term measurement, we suggest building temporary gates at the entrance of the wetland in Pui O and Shui Hau

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Undersigned organizations :

Conservation Association
Designing Hong Kong
Greens Action
Green Peace East Asia
Green Power
Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
Land Justice League

Lantau Buffalo Association
Living Islands Movement
Save Lantau Alliance
The Green Earth
TrailWatch
WWF-Hong Kong